

Pre-Christian

There is some evidence of what pre-Christian worship was like on the site which now contains the minister. The feast day of St. Peter ad Vincula is on the 1st of August which it shares the date with the Anglo-Saxon festival Lammas.

In pre-Christian times in the Anglo-Saxon period at Lammas people would make charms and bless bread at these times. This has connotations with the Goddess Sif who was a Germanic Goddess who was the wife of Thor scholars believe that her golden hair could be symbolic to the golden grain found in fields.

Christianisation

Modern day Stoke on Trent is in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. Mercia was the last kingdom in what would later be England to convert to Christianity. This was under Wulfhere of Mercia in the 650s.



Map of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms

It is also around this time the iconic Anglo-Saxon cross appeared where it now stands. These were often the first evidence of Christianisation where Christians would put up at first a wooden and then a stone cross showing their new faith. This would be where early priests would come to give sermons to the new faithful. After this, in the church would have been built some decades later, with the font arriving soon after that.



Anglo-Saxon Cross at Stoke Minister

This is around the time that St Chad was doing missionary work in Mercia. In which he set up a number of "Minsters" (altars) which became important Christian centres. Records are missing around this period of time but this is possible Stoke Minister may be one of them.

Anglo-Saxon history of

STOKE MINISTER

By Antony Slack

The Danelaw

After the 790s the Vikings began to start raiding, in what would become England. This resulted in "the great heathen army" arriving to England between the years 865-878 resulting in the conquest of Yorkshire, Lancashire, East Anglia and the East Midlands and more.



Map of the Danelaw

Modern day Stoke on Trent was not part of this Kingdom and remained part of what was left of Christianised Mercia. This was an area which the Vikings did raid while they were strong in the North and East of what was to become England.

Through the late 800s the Christian kings in the south began to make gains in England this resulted in King Æthelstan being crowned King of the Anglo-Saxons in 924.